

Washington Place

The tomatoes were green. This place isn't what it used to be. But the coffee was filled and re-filled until a swarm of caffeine buzzed around us.

The ice in the water melted. The ice in the street solidified.

Steam billowed, caught the sun and blinded winter-weary eyes. Sparrows scratched the bone-hard soil in the tiny garden beneath the window.

Hats set to warm on the air conditioning.

Bittersweet chords drifted through half-lit rooms, hot needle tears threatened to spill.
You have fucked up my phone and ruined my holiday.

All this talk of getting older . . .

The roses would not open. Already they wilted on the bare pine table. Shabby white walls pulled shadows into their round high vaults.

Watching snail racing on the Arts Channel.

Cocaine snow powdered Times Square but the dinosaurs were cosy in their sandstone turrets. The witch hazel exploded, cinnamon tufts spiced the freezing air.

Nice but you only live twice.

A pinch of salt in the coffee brought out the hazelnut flavour as we swapped tales of broken hearts. The roach grew stiff on the windowsill.

Messages split and warped in the ether.

Far away the webcam spilled its image into a sanitised basement. Wires, complicated as arteries, choked the floor. The time delay made us feel like astronauts.

Nothing holding us but pixels.

by Ursula Hurley

When Rumi Danced

When Rumi danced,
I wonder if he ever imagined that his words
would leap from his lips to the shelves
of a corporate bookstore somewhere
on the corner of Michigan and Pearson Ave
in the Heartland of America
seven hundred years later
to be read by a small boy
whose parents came over from India
and wishes to know why he understands Shams
though he's never seen a Persian Sun.

by Majid Mohiuddi